

1800 Johnson Street
Baltimore City, Maryland
B-1070
private, 1905

Statement of Significance

The large four-story brick industrial building at 1800 Johnson Street has been the site of a successive series of "needle trade" firms. Built by the W & J Knox Net and Twine Company in 1905, this fine structure was later the home of Baltimore's last major umbrella manufacturer. It serves as a reminder of Baltimore's once great textile industry as well as its golden era of garment manufacture, when the city produced more umbrellas than anywhere else in the world.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

B-1070

0410705714

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

W.J. Knox Net & Twine Company

AND/OR COMMON

1800 Johnson Street Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1800 Johnson Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

—DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

—STRUCTURE

—SITE

—OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

—PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

—BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

—IN PROCESS

—BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

—UNOCCUPIED

—WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

—YES: RESTRICTED

—YES: UNRESTRICTED

—NO

PRESENT USE

—AGRICULTURE

—COMMERCIAL

—EDUCATIONAL

—ENTERTAINMENT

—GOVERNMENT

☒ INDUSTRIAL

—MILITARY

—MUSEUM

—PARK

—PRIVATE RESIDENCE

—RELIGIOUS

—SCIENTIFIC

—TRANSPORTATION

—OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Jacobus Ten Broek Memorial Fund

Telephone #: 659-9316

STREET & NUMBER

1800 Johnson Street

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

— VICINITY OF

Maryland 21230

STATE, zip code

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore City Courthouse

Liber #: RHB 3660

Folio #: 381

STREET & NUMBER

Fayette and Calvert Streets

CITY, TOWN

Baltimore

Maryland

STATE

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

none

DATE

—FEDERAL —STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

B-1070

CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT
☒ GOOD
☐ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED
☐ RUINS
☐ UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

☒ UNALTERED
☐ ALTERED

CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE
☐ MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This massive complex was built in 1905 as the W.J. Knox Net & Twine Company and reflects the influence of New England mill architecture. This four-story brick and timber L-shaped structure is built around a central court containing a power house, maintenance and shipping facilities. It is of slow burning timber construction on cast-iron columns. This formula was developed in New England and later in the textile towns of the South as the industry migrated. The large mass of the main building made it necessary to reinforce the east facade with three buttresses at a later date. The building is very wide and its usefulness for textile manufacturing was only possible because of the availability of artificial light by 1905. Earlier textile mills were relatively narrow because of this requirement and had a maximum number of windows. Windows were originally double-hung sash placed in pairs with a segmental arched lintel. These have been replaced with a smaller modern version.

Originally the south end on the first floor housed the picker house where the manufacturing process began. Bales of cotton were brought from the storage warehouses along Byrd Street to the picker house where they were opened and sent to the carding machines. Spinning of yarn and weaving the nets took place on the upper floors. Interior construction is of heavy timber beams and heavy layered flooring supported by three rows of cast-iron columns.

The structure whose axis parallels Barney Street is of similar construction except for the top floor where a raised monitor with sidelights is supported on wooden posts in the center of the space. Finished nets were taken from this building via a second floor bridge to the tar shed in the center of the complex. Here they were tarred and dried before storage or shipping. Adjacent to the tar shed was a power house which housed air compressors, generators and air cleaning equipment for the plant.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The large four-story brick industrial building at 1800 Johnson Street has been the site of a successive series of "needle trade" firms. Built by the W. & J. Knox Net and Twine Company in 1905, this fine structure was later the home of Baltimore's last major umbrella manufacturer. It serves as a reminder of Baltimore's once great textile industry as well as its golden era of garment manufacture, when the city produced more umbrellas than anywhere else in the world.

The large 1905 industrial building located at 1800 Johnson Street originally housed the manufacturing operations of the W. & J. Knox Net & Twine Company. Little information on this firm's history is available, although they appear to have had additional facilities (probably business offices or retail) on Calvert and Lombard Street in the loft district. The enterprise was typical of the city's many textile manufacturing firms, which specialized in heavy canvas products such as cotton duck broadcloth, seine and twine. In 1933, Knox sold the Johnson Street building to another textile firm, the Linen Thread Company, which had been in business in the loft district at 201 E. Lombard since 1910.

In the 1950 the building became the new home of one of Baltimore's major umbrella manufacturers, the Polan-Katz Company. Founded in 1906 by umbrella salesman Charles Katz, Jesse Polan and William Fox, this firm was for seventy-five years a leading innovative force in the umbrella industry, which for many years was centered in Baltimore. As their operations grew, the Polan-Katz Company moved from its original S. Hanover Street site to successively larger facilities on Baltimore Street & Market Place, Fayette & Hanover, Hopkins & Lombard, and finally to 1800 Johnson Street. Here, the cutting, sewing and finishing operations of the firm were located in the huge open loft spaces of

(con't.)

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Polk's Baltimore City Directories
 Vertical file, Maryland Room, Enoch Pratt Central Library
 Interview & information supplied by Lawrence Katz, former
 President of Polan-Katz Company
 Manekin & Company real estate brochure

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Ann Steele, Dennis Zembala, Leslie Barr

ORGANIZATION

Baltimore Museum of Industry

DATE

May, 1983

STREET & NUMBER

1415 Key Highway

TELEPHONE

(301) 727-4808

CITY OR TOWN

Baltimore

STATE

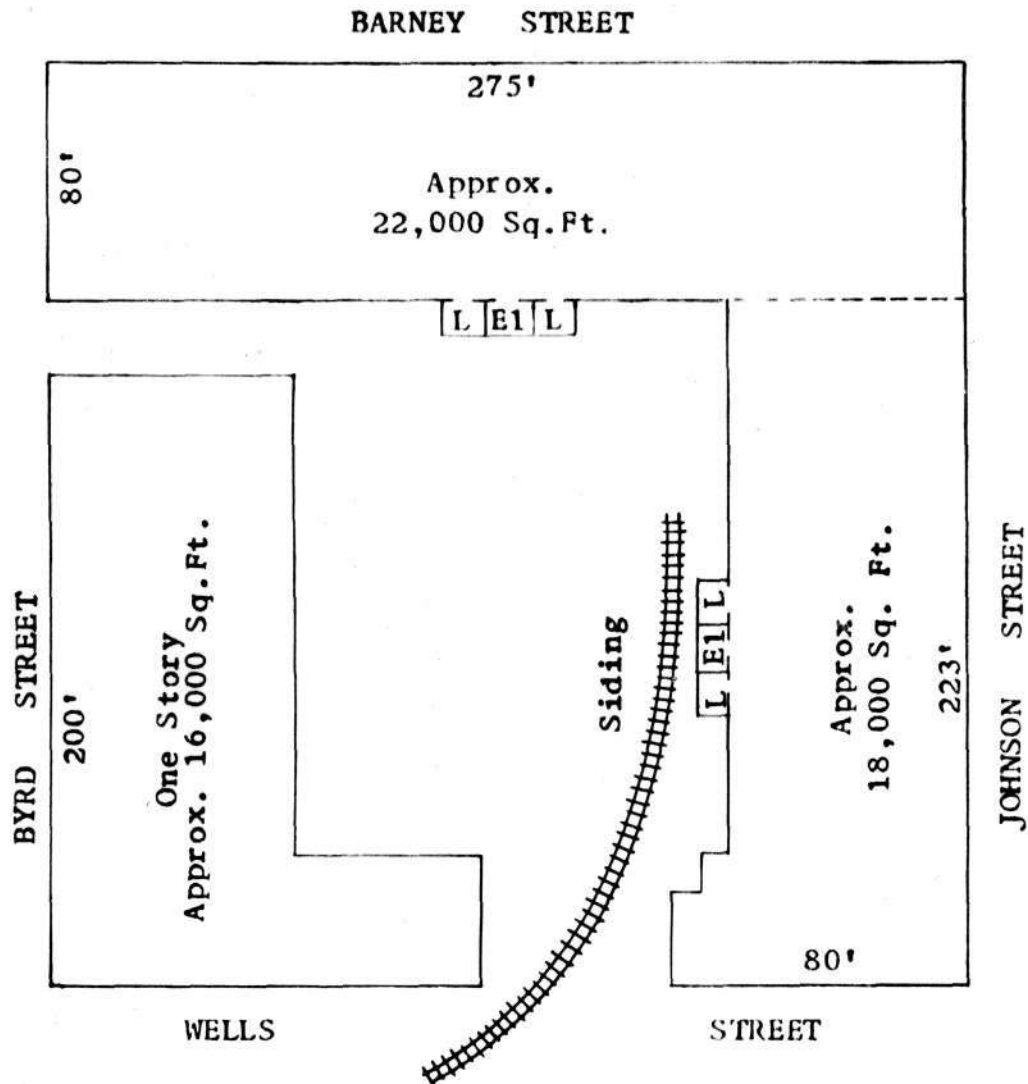
Maryland 21230

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
 The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
 (301) 267-1438

1800 JOHNSON ST.
 - BUILDING -
 (Just 1 Block East of 1800 Light St.)
 5 MINUTES FROM DOWNTOWN
 BALTIMORE



M MANEKIN & CO.
 Commercial and Industrial Realtors

Garrett Bldg. • SARATOGA 7-8333

1800 Johnson Street
 Baltimore City Md
 B-1070

197

194

We have CORNERED . . .



1800 Johnson Street (Former Linen Thread Co. Plant)
5 Minutes from Downtown

THE FINEST SPACE IN BALTIMORE for

- MANUFACTURERS
- DISTRIBUTORS
- PRINTERS
- WHOLESALE . . . etc.

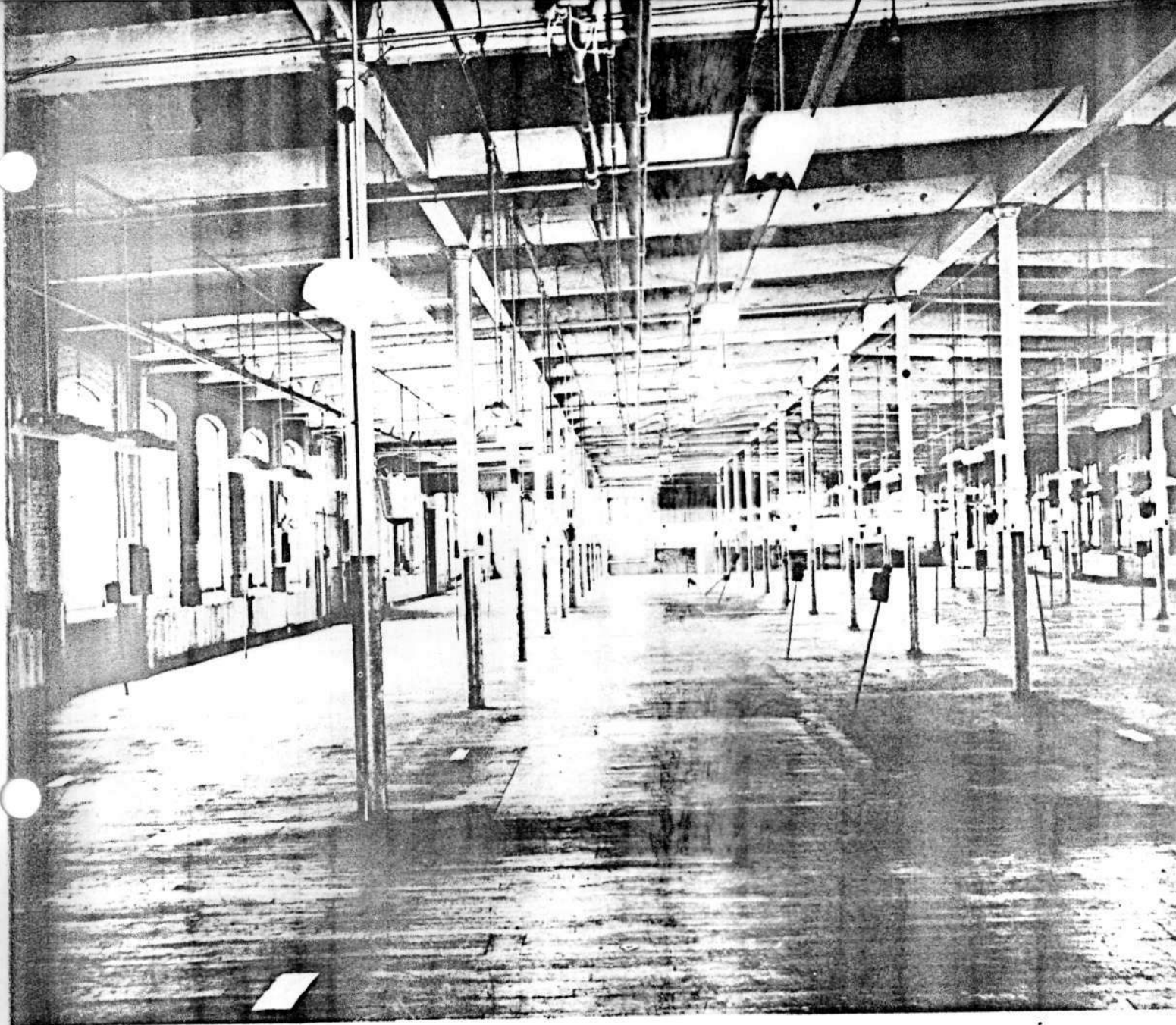
Please turn the page ►

M **ANEKIN & CO.**
Commercial and Industrial Realtors

Garrett Bldg. • SARatoga 7-8333

1800 Johnson St. B-1070
Baltimore City, MD.

Real Estate brochure, c.1949 (in Balto. Museum of Industry collections)



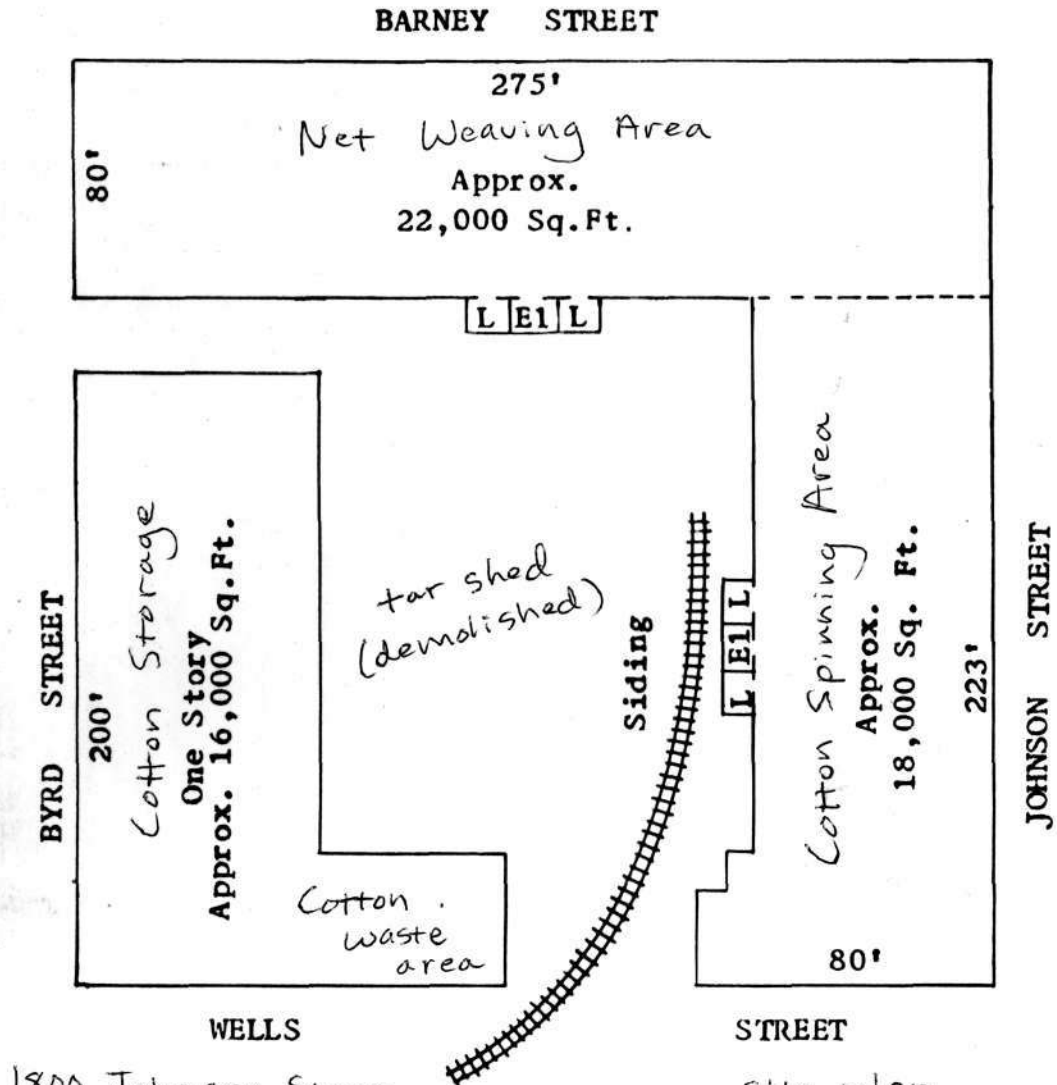
TYPICAL DAYLIGHT FLOOR
4 Story Bldg.

DON'T WAIT - THIS SPACE WILL RENT QUICKLY -

Call us at SARatoga 7-8333, or mail the enclosed postpaid card, to arrange for an inspection and for additional information.

Turn page for directions -----

1800 JOHNSON ST.
- BUILDING -
(Just 1 Block East of 1800 Light St.)
5 MINUTES FROM DOWNTOWN
BALTIMORE



1800 Johnson Street
B-1070

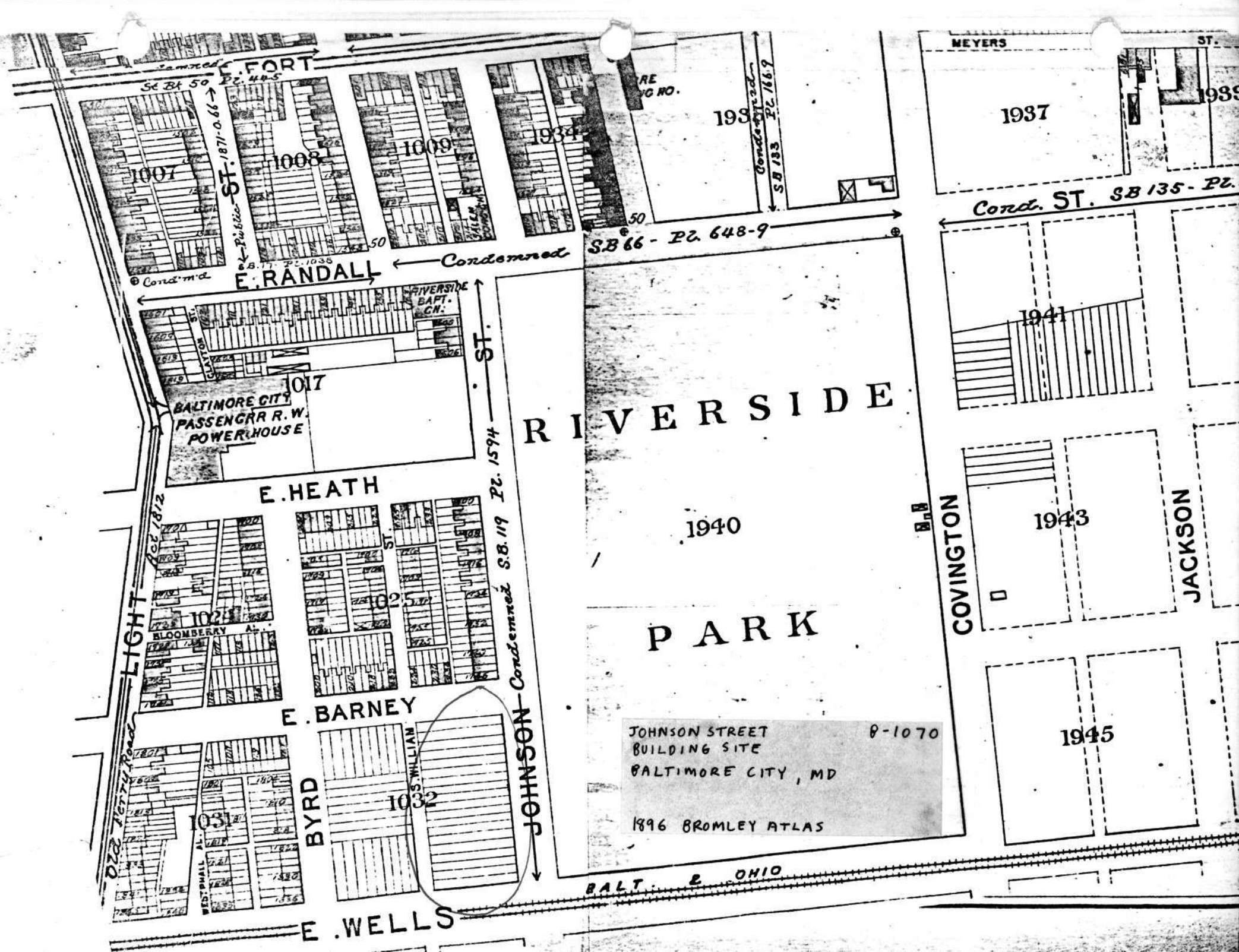
Site plan,
labeled for
Knox Net & Twine Co.
era (c. 1905-1933)

M ANEKIN & CO.

Commercial and Industrial Realtors

Garrett Bldg. • SARatoga 7-8333

1. SITE NO										HAER INVENTORY										Historic American Engineering Record Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240									
2. INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION manufacture										3. PRIORITY										4. DANGER OF DEMOLITION? (SPECIFY THREAT) <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN									
										5. DATE 1905										6. GOVT SOURCE OF THREAT OWNER ADMIN									
																				7. OWNER ADMIN Jacobus Ten Broek Memorial Fund									
8. NAME(S) OF STRUCTURE 1800 Johnson Street										9. OWNER'S ADDRESS																			
10. STATE COUNTY M D COUNTY NAME CITY/VICINITY Baltimore CONG DIST										10. STATE COUNTY COUNTY NAME CITY/VICINITY CONG DIST																			
11. SITE ADDRESS (STREET & NO) 1800 Johnson street										12. EXISTING SURVEYS <input type="checkbox"/> NR <input type="checkbox"/> NHL <input type="checkbox"/> HABS <input type="checkbox"/> HAER- <input type="checkbox"/> HAER <input type="checkbox"/> NPS <input type="checkbox"/> CL6 <input type="checkbox"/> CONF <input type="checkbox"/> STATE <input type="checkbox"/> COUNTY <input type="checkbox"/> LOCAL <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER										13. SPECIAL FEATURES DESCRIBE BELOW <input type="checkbox"/> INTERIOR INTACT <input type="checkbox"/> EXTERIOR INTACT <input type="checkbox"/> ENVIRONS INTACT									
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16. INVENTORIED BY Leslie Barr, Ann Steele, Dennis Zambala										AFFILIATION Balto. Museum of Industry										DATE 5/83									
17. DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND HISTORY INCLUDING CONSTRUCTION DATE(S), HISTORICAL DATE(S), PHYSICAL DIMENSIONS, MATERIALS, EXTANT EQUIPMENT, AND IMPORTANT BUILDERS, ENGINEERS, ETC. see attached																													
18. ORIGINAL USE manufacture										PRESENT USE commercial/manufacture										ADAPTIVE USE									
19. REFERENCES—HISTORICAL REFERENCES, PERSONAL CONTACTS, AND/OR OTHER vertical file Enoch Pratt Library																													
20. URBAN AREA 50,000 POP. OR MORE? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO										21. NPS REGION										22. PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES LIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> YES UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> UNKNOWN									
23. EDITOR INDEXER										23. EDITOR INDEXER										23. EDITOR INDEXER									
24. LOCATED IN AN HISTORIC DISTRICT? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO NAME										DISTRICT I.D. NO																			



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Public ST. 1871-0.66

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SB 66 - PL. 648-9

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SB 133 PL. 166-9

BALTIMORE CITY
PASSENGER R.W.
POWERHOUSE

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E. HEATH

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PARK

1941

1943

1945

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Mapped by the Army Map Service
 Edited and published by the Geological Survey



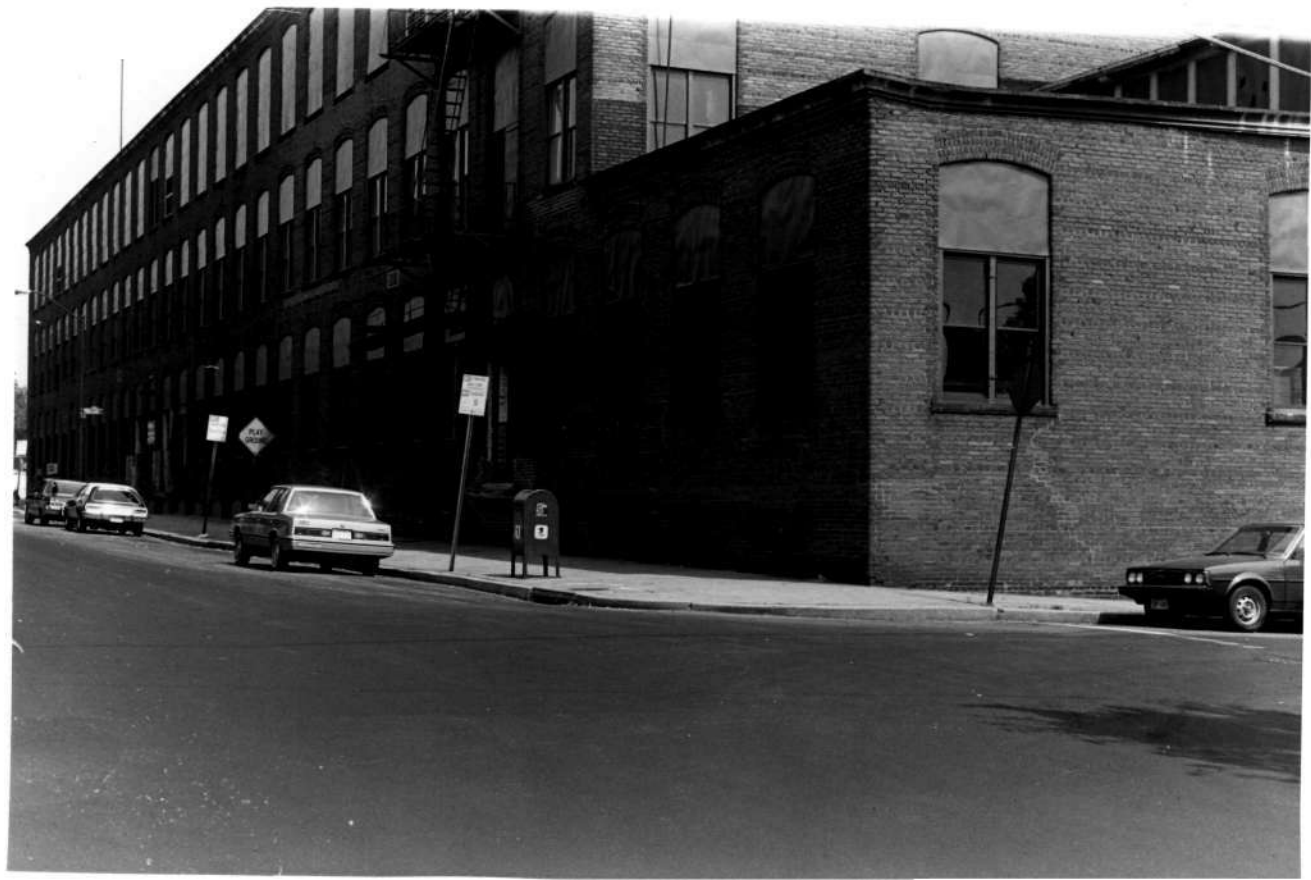
1800 Johnson St.

B-1070

Balto. City Md.

Peter Liebhold 7/83

looking sw



1800 Johnson Street

B-1070

Baltimore Md.

Peter Liechold 7/83

looking SE



B-1070

B-

1800 Johnson ST.

Balto. City, Md.

Peter Liebhold 7/83

Looking northwest



B-1070

B-1

1800 Johnson ST.

Balto. City Md.

Peter Liebhold 7/53

Gatehouse



B-1070

B-10

1800 Johnson St.

Balt. City MD.

Peter Liebhold 7/83

Tar sheds looking north
north



1800 Johnson St B070
Baltimore City MD
Peter Liebhold 8/83

Looking N.E. from
Wells and Byrd



B-1070

B-1

1800 Johnson St.

Balto. City MD.

Peter Liebhold 7/83

cotton waste shed-8.

South Facade